

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) Yes, Sir. The Government has approved in principle, bringing down the equity of the Government of India in Air India to 40% through a process of disinvestment by sale of 40% of equity to a strategic partner, upto 10% to employees and the balance by sale to financial institutions and/or on the share market. In the event of the strategic partner being a joint venture with an element of foreign holding, the arrangement should be such as would limit foreign holding in air India to a maximum of 25% of the total equity.

As regards Indian Airlines, Government has decided to disinvest 51 percent of equity of Indian Airlines out of which 26 percent of the equity would be given to a strategic partner. Remaining 25% of the equity would be offered to the employees financial institutions and public.

Disruption of Delhi-Lucknow-Patna Air service

160. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM:

SHRI SATISH PRADHAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Delhi-Lucknow-Patna, Alliance air flights in the month of May 2000, was forced to fly straight to Patna without touching Lucknow;

(b) if so, the reasons for such diversion and disruption of the flights;

(c) the loss incurred on account of such disruption of the flights; and

(d) whether such incidents are damaging the prestige of Indian air transport system?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) and (b) The diversion of flight CD 7411 operating on Delhi-Lucknow-Patna sector on 12.5.2000 was due to operational reasons. The flight CD 7411, scheduled to leave at 5.40 PM, was initially delayed due to bad weather at Delhi airport. After the aircraft left for take-off, it returned to off-load a passenger who complained of chest pain and wanted to deplane. The flight was further delayed as there was no parking space available at Lucknow airport due to diversion of certain other flights. The revised departure was fixed at 9.45 PM. Since the watch hours available at Patna airport were only till 11.00 PM and the ATC did not allow to extend the watch hours it was decided to re-route the flight via Patna. Had the aircraft operated on the normal route the flight would have

night stopped at Lucknow due to non-availability of watch-hours and would have resulted in cancellation of flight for Patna causing avoidable inconvenience to passengers travelling to/from Patna.

(c) and (d) To avoid losses and inconvenience to the passengers due to non-operation of flights, rerouting/rescheduling is resorted to when it becomes impossible to operate the normal schedule due to operational constraints like inclement weather, watch-hour restrictions and other technical reasons. This is normal practice followed by the airlines under such circumstances.

Delay in Finalising Tender Bids for duty free shops

161. SHRI R.S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government lost Rs. 200 crores due to the indecision of Airports Authority of India in finalising tender bids for duty free shops' as reported in the Indian Express, dated June 1, 2000;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry has been ordered to fix responsibility in this case;

(d) if so, the details thereof alongwith the outcome of the enquiry; and

(e) the corrective steps taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Air Service to Doha (Qatar)

162. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Airlines is likely to start a direct service from the Qatari Capital Doha to Hyderabad;

(b) if so, the other cities in India to be connected with Doha; and

(c) by when would the service likely to start?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.